

SPRING 2025



Springing into Action!

This spring WTS Atlanta sprung into action! From partnerships with local students as part of WTS's TransportationYou program as well as numerous other student outreach events to volunteer events on the BeltLine and with Habitat for Humanity. WTS Atlanta members also had the wonderful opportunity in May to connect with one another and members from throughout North America in the beautiful city of Toronto at the Annual International Conference. This newsletter captures all the fun pictures, collaborative events, and learning opportunities from this spring.

As we move into summer, please join us for the Annual GDOT Board Breakfast on Wednesday, June 18. Read on to learn more and register. We look forward to connecting with you then!

WTS ATLANTA MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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- Message from the President -

WTS Atlanta members have been busy! Our chapter hosted seven events in March and April, including two community service events (Habitat for Humanity Build project and Atlanta Beltline cleanup), student engagement (including participating in ACEC's Introduce a Girl to Engineering) and a happy hour with Gwinnett County DOT.

May was also an eventful month. On May 6-9, WTS Atlanta joined members from across the US and Canada in Toronto for the 2025 WTS International Annual Conference. WTS Atlanta was well represented with about 40 participants, and we had the privilege to honor one of our local scholarship winners, Claudia Boero, who received the Sharon D. Banks scholarship. The chapter hosted a happy hour for Atlanta members and attendees, where we connected through our shared love for this organization and what it means to the Atlanta transportation community. We closed the month with a tour of Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport.

We have so many plans for the months to come...so stay tuned for future events! I look forward to personally greeting and welcoming everyone.



Iris Orfiz WTS Atlanta President

Meet the Board & Committee Chairs Series

Ligia Florim: Driving Change: Engineer, Mentor & Industry Influencer

Path to Transportation

Ligia Florim, a registered Professional Engineer, with over 25 years of experience in transportation systems at the Local, State, and Federal levels. Starting as a Road Designer, she expanded into roadway design, project management, entrepreneurship, and development services. As Pre-construction Engineer at Cobb County DOT, she leads the Pre-construction Engineering team in delivering the County's multi-year transportation program. During her seven-year tenure at Cobb DOT, she has held roles including Project Manager, District Engineer, and Development Services Manager. Previously, she spent over 12 years as president of Bron Cleveland Associates, a Georgiabased Planning and Engineering firm. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from Georgia Tech and a Bachelor of Liberal Arts and an MBA from Oglethorpe University. Her leadership continues to shape transportation infrastructure.

A Moment that Reinforced Her Passion

A pivotal aspect of Ligia Florim's career has been the moments when her work directly impacts others whether through offering feedback, supporting professional growth, or successfully delivering a project. Each opportunity to contribute to someone's success serves as a reminder of the significance of her work, making her feel accomplished and deepening her passion for her career.



ligia Florim WTS Atlanta Chapter Director at Large

Current Role in WTS Atlanta

Ligia has been a dedicated member of WTS Atlanta, actively contributing to the organization's mission through leadership and service. Currently in her third term as Director at Large on the Board, she plays a key role in representing WTS on the Editorial Board of ACEC's Engineering Georgia Magazine and serving as the Board liaison for the Scholarship Committee. Her involvement extends beyond her current position, having previously chaired the Mentor Protégé program and supported various initiatives, including the Membership and Scholarship Luncheon committees.

A Moment She Felt on the Right Track

Ligia Florim feels truly unstoppable at this stage in her career, having clearly defined priorities and a strong network of colleagues to learn from and collaborate with. Surrounded by talented professionals and guided by a strong sense of direction, she remains energized and committed to shaping the future of transportation.

Meet the Board & Committee Chairs Series

Beth Ann Schwartz: Connecting Communities Through Transportation

Path to Transportation

After graduating from Georgia Tech with a degree in Civil Engineering, Beth Ann Schwartz, began her career exploring both geotechnical and transportation engineering. Though she initially worked in materials testing, she soon discovered her true passion for roadway design, leading to a career spanning over 25 years. Today, she plays a key role in advancing Georgia's infrastructure, having contributed to major projects like the Transform 285/400 initiative and the I-285/I-20 West Interchange.

A Moment that Reinforced Her Passion

Beth Ann not only excels in her technical field but also has a genuine passion for connecting with people. Her ability to listen to citizens and stakeholders, understand their concerns, and integrate their stories into meaningful projects is truly special. Transforming a concept into a tangible change that improves lives is what makes Ms. Schwartz stand back and say, "I really love what I do." Her approach highlights the heart and humanity behind engineering—it's not just about structures and systems; it's about people and their communities.



Beth Ann Schwartz, PE WTS Atlanta Chapter Director at Large

Current Role in WTS Atlanta

Beth Ann Schwartz is an active leader within WTS Atlanta, serving as a Director at Large on the Chapter Board. She is deeply committed to the oraanization. contributina growth through planning, promotion, and engagement. Her longstanding dedication is evident in her leadership roles, including Scholarship Luncheon Committee Chair, Silent Auction Chair, and multiple board positions such as WTS Secretary and Vice-President of Membership. As a graduate and current mentor in the WTS Mentor-Protégé Program, she continues to support the development of future leaders. She has played a key role in WTS International Conferences hosted in Atlanta, served on national task forces, and worked on initiatives like Introduce a Girl to Engineering. Her passion for WTS shines through her proactive involvement and continuous advocacy within the transportation ndustrv.

A Moment She Felt on the Right Track



Meet the Board & Committee Chairs Series

Tonia Brown: From Structural Foundations to Roadway Innovations Path to Transportation

While studying at Georgia Tech, Tonia Brown gained early exposure to transportation by interning at GDOT. After graduation, she started her career at a DBE firm, spending a few years refining her skills before pivoting to structural engineering-working in oil and gas on steel platforms/ designing offshore platforms .This experience proved invaluable, opening doors for her as firms recognized her ability to tackle complex engineering challenges. She then joined JJG, where she continued to expand her expertise, and soon after, she transitioned to Jacobs. Now, after 20 years at Jacobs and 23 years in the transportation industry, she has built an extraordinary career, making a lasting impact on roadway design and infrastructure development. Her journey is a testament to the power of adaptability and engineering excellence in shaping a successful professional path.

A Moment that Reinforced Her Passion

One of the most defining moments in Tonia Brown's career—when she truly felt her passion for transportation engineering—was seeing one of her first projects go from design to reality. The project, Lithonia Industrial Boulevard Phase 2 in DeKalb County, was particularly meaningful because it was built in her own backyard, near Stone Mountain. She recalls the moment she was finally able to drive on the roadway she designed, knowing every drainage structure, curb, sidewalk, and even the bridge had her mark on it. The project had a little bit of everything railroad crossings, signalization, walls, and complex staging with detours—making it a true test of her engineering expertise. To this day, she finds herself pointing it out to her daughter, a reminder of the tangible impact of her work. That moment reinforced her love for what she does, proving that the projects she designs don't just exist on paper-they become essential parts of the communities she serves.



Tonia Brown WTS Atlanta Chapter Director at Large

Current Role in WTS Atlanta

Tonia Brown has been an active member of WTS since 2019, dedicating her time and leadership to advancina transportation. women She currently serves on the 2025-2026 Atlanta Chapter Board as a Directorat-Large and has been deeply involved in mentorship and outreach initiatives within the organization. Since 2020, she has participated in the Mentor-Protégé Program as a Mentor, later serving as Co-Chair in 2022 and Chair in 2024. Her commitment was further demonstrated when she successfully led the Tours and Transportation Subcommittee for the 2023 WTS Annual Conference in Atlanta, showcasing innovative and impactful projects shaping Georgia's transportation landscape. As a Board member, she continues to contribute as a committee member and Board liaison for WTS Atlanta's Student Engagement, Community Outreach, and Transportation You programs, reinforcing her dedication to fostering future transportation leaders and strengthening the community.

A Moment She Felt on the Right Track

Tonia feels unstoppable in this moment—not because of a title, but because of the impact she can make. She's in a position where she can pay it forward, encouraging, empowering, and protecting others. She mentioned that it's not just younger engineers—it's also senior-level professionals who may not realize they need someone to speak up for them. Whether they're working hard behind the scenes or unaware of opportunities that could benefit their careers and livelihoods, Tonia ensures their voices are heard. She's using her experience and influence to advocate for those who aren't at the table, creating meaningful change in the industry.



FRAMING THE FUTURE - SOUTHERN CRESCENT HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

by Tonia Brown and Grace Olaleye



Photos (top and above): WTS Atlanta CS&O committee members and volunteers

n March 28th, WTS Atlanta Community Service & Outreach Committee (CS&O) volunteered with the Southern Crescent Habitat for Humanity. This initiative empowers women around the world to positively impact lives in their communities. In supporting the program, WTS is not only investing in building critically needed affordable housing but also helping to build strong and stable neighborhoods where residents can thrive for generations to come. For this WTS Atlanta CS&O Framing the Future event, 20 members arrived bright and early on a Friday workday to frame out homes for two deserving women. We received a safety lesson and then spent the day in teams lifting, placing, and anchoring wood frame walls with hammers and nail guns.

Getting to work alongside fellow WTS Atlanta members to frame these homes for two deserving women was truly rewarding. It's inspiring to see firsthand how this initiative empowers women globally to create positive change right in their own communities. Knowing that our efforts contribute to building not just affordable housing, but strong and stable neighborhoods where families can flourish for generations to come, makes it all the more meaningful.

We thoroughly enjoyed this year's CS&O Framing the Future event and eagerly anticipate future opportunities to contribute. We wholeheartedly encourage more WTS members to join us next year for this incredibly impactful experience!





FUTURE





CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY STUDENT OUTREACH

by Rukiya Thomas

he Clark Atlanta University (CAU) student outreach event took place on April 4th and included Chair Nykita Hurt and committee members who volunteered collectively for a total of two hours. We gave away boxes of chocolate bars wrapped in WTS QR codes reaching about 70 students who were able to sign up right on the spot to join WTS. Overall, the students seemed to be receptive and interested in learning more about our mission and the opportunities available to students including what is involved in chartering a chapter on campus. Most had not heard of WTS so we were encouraged to increase awareness at an Historically Black College/University (HBCU). A special thank you to Ziggy for working so diligently to expedite the delivery of our t-shirts they look amazing. Our goal is to recruit and establish two new student chapters each year. This year we will focus on schools within the AUC and Kennesaw State.



Photos (top and above): Chair Nykita Hurt and Rukiya Thomas and students



WTS GEORGIA TECH STUDENT CHAPTER EVENT

by Sherl White

ris Ortiz, Dania Aponte, Sherl White, and Kaycee Mertz were invited by the WTS Georgia Tech Student Chapter to serve as panelists to discuss "The Grad School Advantage." WTS Atlanta panelists highlighted and shared their experiences and insights with students on how graduate education has provided professionals with an advantage in their careers. The panel took place on Thursday, April 10 at the Mason Building at Georgia Tech.



Photos (top and above): Panelists Sherl White, Iris Ortiz, Dania Aponte, and Kaycee Mertz and student leaders



INTRODUCE A GIRL TO ENGINEERING

by Sherl White



n Saturday, April 19th, the WTS Atlanta Chapter participated in the ACEC annual Introduce a Girl to Engineering event. This event was a half-day program sponsored by the engineering community to introduce girls to engineering through fun projects and activities. The event includes hands-on activities that will expose students to engineering concepts in an interactive and engaging way led by engineering professionals, scientists, and STEM college students. Our activity "Make your own Glue" was a success where the girls made glue from baking soda, vinegar and skim milk. The challenge portion was to test the strength of the glue against the weight of pennies.

Our WTS participants were Iris Ortiz, Nzinga Gantt, Martika Johanson-Murray, Krystal Dixon, Dania Aponte, Elizabeth Diamond, Angela Nguyen, Kiana Byrd, Tonia Brown, and Sherl White.

Photos: TYOU committee members and volunteers at event





















ATLANTA BELTLINE CLEANUP - SOUTHSIDE TRAIL

by Grace Olaleye



ur recent WTS Atlanta BeltLine cleanup initiative on April 26th brought together eight members for a meaningful community effort. We focused our attention on the Southwest Corridor, working along the 1.7-mile stretch that connects Pittsburg Yards to the vibrant Lee and White development. We collected litter and debris, directly contributing to the improved appearance and environmental health of this popular urban trail.

This collective effort reflects our commitment to giving back to the Atlanta community and ensuring the BeltLine remains a clean and enjoyable space for all. We look forward to partnering with the BeltLine each spring. Join us next year!



Photos (above and top): WTS members volunteering along Southside Trail



GWINNETT COUNTY DOT HAPPY HOUR

by Sherl White

he WTS Atlanta Chapter in conjunction with the Gwinnett County Department of Transportation hosted their joint Happy Hour event at the Parkside District restaurant in Lawrenceville, GA on April 29th. This combined event created a comfortable space for socializing and networking with our chapter members and the local DOT representatives. Our sincere thanks to Edgardo Aponte, Natasha Tyler, and Michelle Arnold for honoring us with their presence. It is the Atlanta Chapter's hope that our quarterly happy hour events can expand its reach and continue engaging with the transportation community in Metro Atlanta. May this just be the beginning of future collaboration and joint events with Gwinnett County.









2025 WTS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

by Iris Ortiz

he 2025 WTS Internation Annual Conference was hosted in Toronto, Canada, May 6-9. We had a strong presence, with almost 40 attendees hailing from Georgia. The Atlanta Chapter hosted a small reception on Wednesday, May 7 for its members and guests. Claudia Boero, one of our local scholarship winners was awarded a WTS Foundation scholarship, which she received at the Scholarships and Awards Gala, and WTS Atlanta maintained the Gold Chapter Circle of Excellence Award designation for 2025. We had lots to celebrate and enjoy, in addition to all the technical and professional development sessions and tours learning about major transportation projects in Toronto.





Photo (above): Scholarship winner, Claudia Boero, Sherl White, and WTS Atlanta President Iris Ortiz Photo (top and right): WTS Atlanta members; 2025-26 Board of Directors attendees and WTSI Board member Malika Reed-Wilkins, Ph.D.



ATL AIRPORT BEHIND-THE-SCENES TOUR

by Iris Ortiz

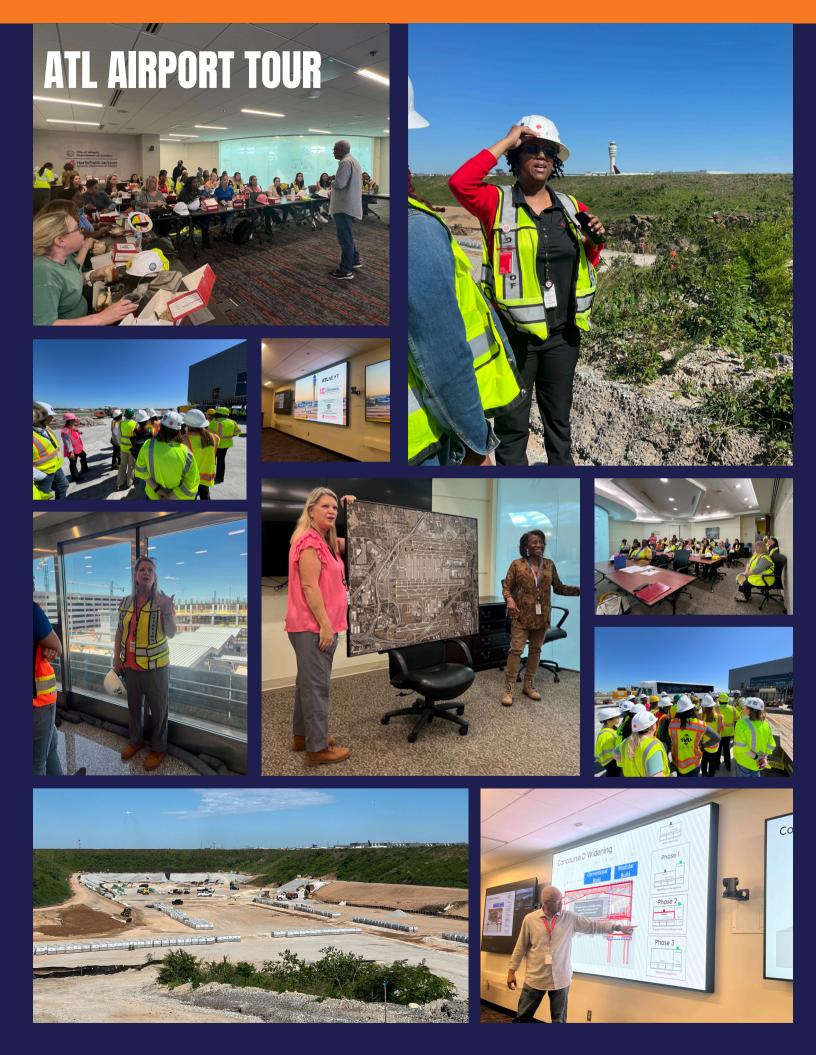


Photo (above): Jan Lennon, Executive Deputy General Manager Photo (top): Tour attendees

n May 22nd, WTS Atlanta hosted a behind the scenes tour of the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. It was an amazing opportunity to hear from airport leaders about ongoing and future projects. The ATL is the busiest airport in the WORLD! It was amazing to see planes constantly landing and taking off while we were out in the field visiting a few project sites. We visited the Quarry Stabilization Project, Concourse D Widening Project, South Deck 1 Project and the Airport Administration Center Project.

WTS Atlanta would like to thank the ATL leadership, starting with Executive Deputy GM, Jan Lennon, MS, IAP, who opened the tour with her wisdom, encouraging words and a message that resonated with those in the room. I particularly recall: "excellence without exhaustion," a call for selfcare while taking on the challenges of a successful career... and a call also to action in our careers and on what we do. Words don't mean anything without action. Also thanks to Frank Rucker, Deputy GM of Infrastructure, for presenting on the many ongoing projects and what's to come in 2026.

Special thanks to Shelley Lamar and Jaimi Tapp, IAP for taking time of their busy day and doing this tour for us, and all the airport staff and contractors who supported them.





TRANSPORTATION YOU

by Martika Johanson-Murray



Photos (top and above): TYOU committee members and South Atlanta high school students

his semester our committee has grown both in mentor support and student involvement. As we celebrate the end of spring semester, it is my honor to share with our chapter, corporate partners, and colleagues what we've been up to at South Atlanta High School. Over the course of four total meetings, the 2025 TYOU committee was able to share invaluable knowledge about the transportation industry, provide guidance and feedback for our young leaders, and offer support in a safe space for all of our scholars.

We conducted a mock interview exercise to target building confidence and prepare the students for job interviews and applications in February. Our March meeting included a technical tour of the GDOT TMC Operations Facility. On this tour GDOT TMC highlighted overseeing traffic and accidents, winter preparations, showcasing the operations floor with the CCTV video streams, and the technology utilized to make travel safer in the state of Georgia. For April and May, our program hosted two WTS young professionals and Karri Thomas, P.E. (Jacobs) presented a recent project about Construction Engineering Inspections with the SR400 - 285 interchange redesign. GDOT's Transportation Management Center (TMC) is ground zero for mobility in the state and the nerve center for our world-class intelligent transportation system (ITS). Operating 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, the TMC is committed to enhancing travel safety and transportation efficiency by managing incidents,

TRANSPORTATION YOU

controlling traffic, and providing accurate information to the traveling public. WTS Transportation You committee members accompanied South Atlanta High School students on a tour of the operations facility including a video presentation, speaking directly with the women in leadership, and getting a firsthand look at Ops Floor. A big thanks to Anslee Schroeder, Ariana Ward, Kim Williams, and our friends at GDOT TMC for making this educational tour possible.

The committee had great discussions about the public modes of transportation, and all the different coordination and firms involved to make this project truly safe and successful. Additionally, the TYOU group discussed how to advocate for yourself









Photos: TYOU committee members and South Atlanta high school students at the GDOT TMC tour

TRANSPORTATION YOU

professionally and the role that personal health plays in our everyday lives. As women we sometimes feel the need to say "yes" to everything; however, it is also okay to decline if our plate is already full. We finished the semester off with another guest speaker, Shaniya Marshall (Pilot, PrettyPinkPilots, LLC) who is working towards flying commercially for a large airline on her own jet. Ms. Marshall presented at our May meeting to engage the students in defining goals, categorizing shortterm, long term, personal, and professional goals.

We are proud to recognize our two young ladies from South Atlanta High School that will be attending the WTS 2025 Transportation YOU Capital Summit June 21st – 27th at the University of

Maryland College Park. At this summit, students will participate in multimodal transportation tours and sessions, enjoy hands-on engineering activities, network with other students and guest speakers around the nation, from discover career opportunities the within industry, develop leadership & team building skillsets, as well as foster new lifelong friendships. It is an absolute honour to be chairing this lovely committee. Without our mentors, fabulous board members, and corporate partners none of this would be possible, thank you for your ongoing support. so Congratulations to Demaya Thomas and Cheyenne Robinson! From all of us at WTS, we wish you both the best of luck wrapping up your 10th grade school year.



Photos (top left): TYOU committee members and South Atlanta high school students at the April event Photos (top right, bottom left and right): TYOU committee members and South Atlanta high school students at the May event



ANNUAL GDOT BOARD BREAKFAST WEDNESDAY 6.18.25

Women of GDOT: Their Professional Career Journey

7:30 AM - 9:00 AM (Doors open at 7:00 AM)

CROWNE PLAZA ATLANTA MIDTOWN

590 W. Peachtree Street NW, Atlanta Sky East Room, 28th Floor

\$90 for WTS Members \$120 for Non-Members

Breakfast will be served. Space is limited.

REGISTER

TODAY

Back-to-School Supply Drive to benefit the Atlanta Mission Amazon Shopping link



WHAT WE NEED: Composition Notebooks, Wide-Ruled Notebook Paper, Multi-Color Construction Paper, 3-Prong Folders, Pencil Box or Pouch, Headphones, Pink Erasers, Dry Erase Expo Markers, 24-Count Crayons, #2 Pencils, Glue Sticks, Scissors (safety & regular)

WTS Atlanta Presents

SUPPLY DRIVE

What We Need: Composition Notebooks, Wide-Ruled Notebook Paper, Multi-Color Construction Paper, 3-Prong Folders, Construction Paper, 3-Prong Folders, Pencil Box or Pouch, Headphones, Pink Erasers, Dry Erase Expo Markers, 24-Count Crayons, #2 Pencils, Glue Sticks, Scissors (safety & regular) https://atlantamission.org/

-Collection Period-

Through June 17th

Questions? krystal.dixon@arcadis.com

2025 WTS Atlanta Upcoming Events Calendar

January	February	March
Membership Meeting (1/30)	Black History Month Event – John Lewis "Good Trouble at the Rialto Center for Arts" (2/21)	Women's History Month Event - Habitat for Humanity: Framing the Future (3/28)
April	Μαγ	June
WTS Atlanta/Gwinnett County Happy Hour (4/29) Community Service & Outreach Event - Atlanta BeltLine Cleanup (4/26) ACEC Introduce a Girl to Engineering (4/19)	WTS Annual Conference (5/7-9, Toronto) 100th Anniversary of Hartsfield- Jackson Atlanta Airport Event (5/22)	GDOT Board Breakfast (6/18)
July	August	September
Professional Branding Webinar (7/17)	WTS Atlanta/Cobb County Happy Hour (TBD) DBE Social Event w/ D&I Committee (TBD)	Multimodal Exchange Event (TBD)
October	November	December
(TBD)	Scholarship and Awards Luncheon (11/7)	Holiday Party (TBD)

Member Opportunities

WTS Atlanta Mission

WTS Atlanta seeks to close the workforce gap in the Atlanta regional transportation industry by promoting lifelong careers in transportation for women. By attracting, retaining and advancing women in the industry, WTS Atlanta will be the most recognized network of transportation subject matter experts.

Get Involved!!

There are many ways to get involved this year! From joining a WTS Atlanta committee to participating in local events throughout the year. If you were unable to attend this year's membership event, take a moment to view the presentation below.

Want to learn more about our amazing benefits, like professional and leadership development, networking, educational programming, volunteering and mentorship, and events? Please contact our Vice President of Membership, Amanda von Oldenburg at Amanda.vonOldenburg@atkinsrealis.com.

> <u>View Membership</u> <u>Presentation Here</u>

<u>Volunteer Sign up</u> <u>Sheet</u>

Connect with WTS Atlanta

We love connecting with our WTS community on social media. Please follow, like and share WTS Atlanta! Also, check out our industry job postings here.



Member Opportunities

WTS International Vision

Equity and access for women in transportation.

WTS International Mission

WTS attracts, sustains, connects and advances women's careers to strengthen the transportation industry.

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Get Involved!!

Check out these WTS International events for 2025:

WTS International Chair's Reception at TRB Annual Meeting

WTS Workshops & Webinars

Distinguished Speaker Series

WTS Connects: Member Meetups

WTS Fall Women Business Owner's Roundtable

WTS International Annual Conference

WTS Capital Summit

WTS Signature Leadership Training

WTS Chapter Leadership Summit

For more information on these events:

<u>View Events Here</u>

Member Opportunities

Get Scholarships!!

Stay tuned for scholarship opportunities coming out Summer/Fall 2025!

Strategic Partner Scholarships

Sharon D. Banks Memorial Undergraduate Scholarship

Helene M. Overly Memorial Graduate Scholarship

Molitoris Leadership Scholarship for Undergraduates

Bridgette Beato Leadership Legacy Scholarship for Graduates

Junior College/Trade School Scholarship

WTS Transportation YOU High School Scholarship

For more information on these scholarships:

<u>View Scholarships</u> <u>Here</u>



Out with OLD...IN with the NEW Don't forget our new public LinkedIn page is <u>WTS Atlanta</u>

